

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1186

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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STATE FOR EUR/RPE, VIENNA FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: CSCE BASKET II: CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

REF: (A) STATE 233202, (B) PRAGUE 2408 (NOTAL), (C) PRAGUE A-73
(NOTAL), (D) PRAGUE A-38 (NOTAL), (E) PRAGUE 1807 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: CZECHOSLOVAKIA PUBLISHES STATISTICAL YEAR-
BOOK WHICH CONTAINS GOOD THOUGH LATE FIGURES ON ALL
SECTORS OF SOCIETY AND ECONOMY. AGRICULTURE AND DOMESTIC
PRODUCTION FIGURES ARE TOO BROAD FOR MANY SPECIFIC USES
SUCH AS MARKET RESEARCH. FOREIGN TRADE FIGURES ARE GOOD
AND UTILIZE SITC. CZECHOSLOVAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PUBLISHES MATERIALS IN ENGLISH OF USE TO FOREIGN
BUSINESSMEN. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF CHANGE IN
SCOPE OR METHOD OF STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS SINCE
HELSINKI SIGNING. END SUMMARY.

2. BASIC STATISTICAL SOURCE IS STATISTICKA
ROCENKA CSSR (STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF CZECHO-
SLOVAKIA) WHICH PROVIDES DATA ON ALL SECTORS OF
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SOCIETY AND ECONOMY. INCLUDED IN YEARBOOK ARE

FIGURES ON PRODUCTION, NATIONAL INCOME, BUDGET, CONSUMPTION, AND PRODUCTIVITY AS MENTIONED IN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL INFORMATION SECTION OF HELSINKI ACCORD. STATISTICS ON GNP ARE EXPRESSED IN MARXIST TERMS (I.E., SOCIAL PRODUCT) AND MUCH SPACE IS DEVOTED TO VARIOUS INDEXES WHICH ARE OF LITTLE REAL USE. HOWEVER YEARBOOK ALSO PROVIDES RAW DATA IN USEABLE UNITS SUCH AS MONETARY AND QUANTITATIVE MEASURES.

3. AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN YEARBOOK AND IS AVAILABLE THROUGH NO OTHER PUBLISHED SOURCE. INFORMATION PROVIDED IS DETAILED AND USEFUL FOR HISTORICAL PURPOSES. STATISTICS FOUND IN YEARBOOK ARE NOT ADEQUATE FOR MARKET AND CROP ASSESSMENTS AND FORECASTS AND EMBASSY HAS EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE WHO IS ACCREDITED HERE.

4. FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS ALSO APPEAR IN YEARBOOK AND ARE GOOD. EXPORTS AND IMPORTS ARE SHOWN BY COUNTRY AND SITC IS UTILIZED TO THREE-DIGIT LEVEL.

5. PROBLEMS WITH STATISTICS PROVIDED BY YEARBOOK ARE TIMELINESS AND LEVEL OF AGGREGATION. MOST RECENT YEARBOOK AVAILABLE IS 1975 EDITION WHICH COVERS 1974 DATA. 1976 EDITION, WHICH WILL HAVE 1975 DATA, IS EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER. IN SHORT, ANNUAL DATA IS PUBLISHED ALMOST ONE FULL CALENDAR YEAR AFTER YEAR BEING REPORTED. AS NOTED PARA 4, FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS ARE REPORTED BY COUNTRY DOWN TO THE THREE-DIGIT LEVEL OF SITC. DOMESTIC PRODUCTION FIGURES ARE ANOTHER STORY. WHILE WLL SECTORS ARE COVERED AND DETAIL IS SUFFICIENTLY SPECIFIC FOR GOOD BROAD-BRUSH ANALYSIS, SECTORS ARE TOO HIGHLY AGGREGATED FOR MANY PURPOSES, FOR EXAMPLE MARKET RESEARCH. EMBASSY HAS ON THREE OCCASIONS IN 1976 REQUESTED MORE SPECIFIC INFOR-

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MATION ON CERTAIN PRODUCTION FOR USE IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND HAS ON EACH OCCASION BEEN REBUFFED (REFS B, C, AND D). COMMERCIAL SECTION HAS AT OTHER TIMES SOUGHT ADDITIONAL STATISTICAL INFORMATION AT A LESS FORMAL LEVEL FROM FOREIGN TRADE COMPANIES (FTO'S) WITH LITTLE SUCCESS.

6. PROBLEM OF TIMELINESS IS PARTIALLY OFFSET BY MONTHLY PUBLICATION STATISTICKE PREHLEDY (STATISTICAL SURVEY) WHICH PROVIDES CURRENT INFORMATION LATER INCLUDED IN YEARBOOK BUT ON MUCH LESS DETAILED BASIS. THREE OTHER YEARBOOKS ARE PUBLISHED WHICH COVER THE INDUSTRIES BUILDING CONSTRUCTION, CHEMISTRY, AND ENGINEERING. ALL PUBLICATIONS ARE IN CZECH LANGUAGE.

7. AVAILABILITY OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING FOREIGN TRADE IS MIXED. EMBASSY HAS BEEN REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING COPIES OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS (IN ENGLISH) WHICH COME TO OUR ATTENTION BUT WE HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN WITH EXPLANATION THAT REGULATION SOUGHT WAS FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY. GENERALLY WE HAVE NO SERIOUS COMPLAINTS IN THIS SPHERE YET.

8. GENERAL TRENDS TO BE EXPECTED IN DEVELOPMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAK ECONOMY READILY AVAILABLE UNDER AEGIS OF WIDE PUBLICITY OF FIVE-YEAR PLANS. MORE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PLAN, PARTICULARLY AS REFLECTED IN YEARLY PLANS, REMAIN MYSTERY TO US. EMBASSY HAS YET TO MAKE SATISFACTORY CONTACT IN PLANNING COMMISSION, AND ALTHOUGH BROAD LINES OF DEVELOPMENT ARE WELL-KNOWN, ITEMS SUCH AS FINANCING, SOURCING, INTERNAL CREDIT AVAILABILITY FOR PROJECTS, ETC. ARE SECRET.

9. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA ARE HELPFUL TO AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN IN PROVIDING PUBLISHED MATERIALS. CHAMBER PUBLISHES, IN ENGLISH, DOCUMENT WHICH LISTS AND DESCRIBES ALL FTO'S AND REPRESENTA-
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TIVE AGENCIES. CHAMBER ALSO EXTRACTS FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS FROM YEARBOOK FOR ENGLISH PUBLICATION. ORGANIZATION CHARTS OF FTO'S OR ENTERPRISES ARE UNHEARD OF. MAIN QUESTION AND PROBLEM IN COMMERCIAL ASSISTANCE IS WHO'S WHO IN FTO'S, AND ALTHOUGH WE HAVE FAIR IDEA OF WHO DOES WHAT AMONG MOST FREQUENTED FTO'S, THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED BY TRIAL AND ERROR AND IS STILL SUBJECT TO MISUNDERSTANDING.

10. SINCE SIGNING OF HELSINKI ACCORDS CZECHOSLOVAK AND U.S. CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE HAVE ESTABLISHED JOINT ECONOMIC COUNCIL. FIRST PLENARY MEETING HELD IN PRAGUE IN JUNE (REF E) AND RESULTS WERE GENERALLY SATISFACTORY.

11. COMMENT: STATISTICS PUBLISHED ON FOREIGN TRADE

ARE GOOD, THOUGH LATE, BUT FIGURES AVAILABLE
FOR DOMESTIC PRODUCTION, INCLUDING AGRICULTURE, ARE
SEVERELY TARNISHED BY LATENESS AND AGGREGATION. WE
HAVE NO INDICATION THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS WILL COOPERATE
WHEN ASKED FOR MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAN IS
PROVIDED IN YEARBOOK (PARA 5 ABOVE). ALL PUBLICA-
TIONS MENTIONED HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED FOR MANY
YEARS IN ROUGHLY SAME FORMAT AS THEY NOW APPEAR. SCOPE
OF PUBLISHED STATISTICAL MATERIAL IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA
HAS CHANGED NOT AT ALL SINCE SIGNING OF HELSINKI
ACCORDS.
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